

Message Text

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51

ACTION PM-03

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 EUR-12 EA-06 NEA-09 ISO-00 ACDA-05 SAJ-01

CIAE-00 DODE-00 H-01 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 MMS-01 AEC-05

AECE-00 EB-07 /097 W

----- 021744

P R 041255Z FEB 75

FM AMEMBASSY PORT LOUIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4992

INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

AMEMBASSY TANANARIVE

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

CINCUSNAVEUR

COMIDEASTFOR

CINCPAC

USS CAMDEN

C O N F I D E N T I A L PORT LOUIS 0073

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MPOL, MARR, MP

SUBJECT: MAURITIUS TV FORUM DENOUNCES US BASE ON DIEGO GARCIA

1. SUMMARY: GOM MINISTER JAGATSHINGH CHAIRED TV PROGRAM ATTACKING
US ON DIEGO GARCIA. SPEAKERS CHARGED THAT US PLANS NUCLEAR BASE,
INTENDS TO INSTALL LONG-RANGE MISSILES AND CALLED FOR INTERNATIONAL
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MEETING TO PROTEST "MILITARIZATION OF INDIAN OCEAN". END SUMMARY.

2. PRE-RECORDED "FORUM" CHAIRED BY MINISTER JAGATSINGH IN HIS CAPACITY AS PRESIDENT OF MAURITIUS NATIONAL PEACE COUNCIL (MNPC) DENOUNCED AMERICAN "BASE" ON DIEGO GARCIA ON TV PRIME TIME EVENING FEBRUARY 3. THREE SPEAKERS FROM MNPC ALTERNATED WITH 3 MAURITIAN MILITANT MOVEMENT (MMM) OFFICIALS INCLUDING FIRST EVER LOCAL TV APPEARANCE MMM SECRETARY GENERAL PAUL BERENGER. PRIME MINISTER AUTHORIZED FORUM AND INVITATION TO BERENGER TO PARTICIPATE. THIS IS FIRST TIME A FULL SCALE PUBLIC ATTACK ON US-DIEGO GARCIA POLICY JOINED BY TOP GOM OFFICIAL. AT END OF PROGRAM, JAGATSINGH STATED THAT HE HAD ASSURED BERENGER THAT HE COULD SAY WHATEVER HE WANTED TO AND CONSIDERED THAT HE HAD KEPT HIS PROMISE TO ALLOW EVERYONE TO SPEAK HIS OPINION CORRECTLY, FRANKLY AND FORCEFULLY.

3. JAGATSINGH OPENED "FORUM" STATING THAT MNPC HAS TAKEN A FIRM AND CATEGORIC STAND AGAINST "MILITARIZATION OF THE INDIAN OCEAN". MRS. RANI HEERAMEN, CONFIDENTIAL SECRETARY TO PRIME MINISTER, FOLLOWED WITH CLAIM THAT RECENT WORLD PEACE CONFERENCE IN NEW DELHI (NOV. 15-17), WHICH SHE ATTENDED WITH JAGATSINGH, HAD ALERTED PUBLIC OPINION TO DANGERS OF MILITARIZATION AND CALLED FOR WOMEN TO PLAY MORE ACTIVE ROLE. ANOTHER MNPC SPEAKER, RESCHAD KHADAROO, SUGGESTED ANTI-DIEGO FORCES TAKE TWO ACTIONS: 1) AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE IN MAURITIUS TO MOBILIZE WORLD OPINION AGAINST "MILITARIZATION OF THE INDIAN OCEAN", AND THAT 2) AN INTER-NATIONAL COMMISSION BE ESTABLISHED TO STUDY LEGAL ASPECTS AND DETERMINE IF DIEGO GARCIA CAN BE RETURNED TO MAUTITIUS JURISDICTION. JAGATSINGH RESPONDED THAT THE MAURITIAN DELEGATION AT THE WORLD PEACE CONFERENCE IN NEW DELHI HAD INVITED THE WORLD PEACE CONGRESS TO MEET IN MAURITIUS AND HE IS ALMOST CERTAIN THAT THERE WILL BE A MEETING HERE IN THE SECOND HALF OF 1975.

4. MMM SPEAKERS TOOK SHRILL "ANTI-IMPERIALIST" LINE. PRESIDENT JUGNAUTH CLAIMED DIEGO WOULD BE NUCLEAR BASE AND THAT NUCLEAR BOMBERS WOULD USE LENGTHENED AIR STRIP AS TAKE-OFF POINT. JUHNAUTH RHETORICALLY ASKED WHY THE UNITED STATES WOULD COME TO DIEGO GARCIA. IS IT TO "DEFEND OUR INTERESTS OR THEIRS?" HE THEN CONTENDED THAT THE BASE WOULD BE USED FOR "IMPERIALIST" INTERESTS SUCH AS ALLEGED US "THREAT" TO ATTACK OIL PRODUCING COUNTRIES. HE NOTED THAT MAURITIUS HAD BEEN SPARED DURING TWO WORLD WARS BUT WOULD NOW BE A PART OF THIRD WORLD WAR BECAUSE OF THE NEARBY AMERICAN BASE AND

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COMMENTED THAT THE BASE ALSO COULD BE USED IN THE FUTURE TO MOVE AGAINST A "POPULAR" GOVERNMENT IN MAURITIUS LIKE ALLENDE GOVERNMENT IN CHILE. JUHNAUTH CLAIMED THAT JAGATSINGH HAD TOLD BERENGER THAT THE AMERICANS INTENEDE TO INSTALL LONG-RANGE NUCLEAR MISSILES ON DIEGO. IN TURN, JAGATSINGH CORRECTED JUHNAUTH SAYING THAT HE ONLY HEARD THAT THE AMERICANS WERE GOING TO INSTALL LONG-RANGE MISSILES AND HE HIMSELF WONDERED WHY THE MISSILES WOULD BE INSTALLED IN DIEGO GARCIA.

5. BERENGER BLAMED THE DIEGO GARCIA "PROBLEM" ON THE RAMGOOLAM GOVERNMENT. HE CLAIMED THAT RAMGOOLAM HIMSELF ADMITS THAT HE MADE A "DEAL" WITH THE BRITISH OVER DIEGO GARCIA AT INDEPENDENCE. BERENGER CALLED FOR GREATER INTERNATIONAL ACTION BUT SAID THAT NOTHING COULD BE DONE UNTIL THE PRESENT RAMGOOLAM GOVERNMENT WAS REPLACED THROUGH EARLY ELECTIONS. BERENGER CLAIMED THAT SOME LITTORAL COUNTRIES SUCH AS MADAGASCAR AND TANZANIA ARE SUSPICIOUS OF WHAT MAURITIUS IS DOING BY PERMITTING DIEGO GARCIA TO BE "MILITARIZED." BERENGER NOTED THAT THE GOM HAS REFUSED HIM PERMISSION TO HOLD PUBLIC MEETINGS AND DEMONSTRATE AGAINST US EMBASSY IN OPPOSITION TO THE DIEGO GARCIA BASE. (MMM HAD ANNOUNCED THAT MEETINGS WOULD BE HELD WEEK OF FEBRUARY 16-23.)

6. IN HIS COMMENTS ENDING THE FORUM, JAGATSINGH DEFENDED THE MLP RECORD AND SAID THAT DEMONSTRATIONS AND BREAKING WINDOWS WOULD NOT HELP REMEDY THE PROBLEM. HE SAID THAT THE LABOR PARTY AND MMM HAVE DIFFERENCES BUT THAT BOTH PARTIES AGREE THAT DIEGO GARCIA IS A SERIOUS QUESTION AND THAT ACTION SHOULD BE TAKEN TO BRING ABOUT A SOLUTION. MAURITIUS, HE SAID, SHOULD WORK TOGETHER WITH LIKE-MINDED COUNTRIES SUCH AS ZAMBIA, TANZANIA, INDIA AND AUSTRALIA TO OPPOSED DIEGO GARCIA BASE BUT BRANDED AS COMPLETELY FALSE BERENGER'S SUPPOSITION THAT TANZANIA WAS SUSPICIOUS OF MAURITIUS.

7. TV FORUM GIVEN BIG ADVANCE BUILD-UP RESULTING IN ONE OF LARGEST TV AUDIENCES. DOMESTIC POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS OF LEADING MLP OFFICIAL (JAGATSINGH IS MLP SECRETARY GENERAL) SHARING PLATFORM WITH BERENGER WAS A MAJOR REASON FOR ATTENTION GIVEN BROADCAST ALTHOUGH US-DIEGO GARCIA ISSUE ALSO HOLDS GREAT INTEREST. REACTIONS FROM ALL CIRCLES IN MAURITIUS ARE DEVELOPING. FURTHER EMBASSY COMMENTS WILL FOLLOW.

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Message Attributes

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